

***Draft Meeting Notes***

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Members in attendance: Nancy Amidei, Rebecca Barnes, Chuck Broches, David Cohanin, Dan Eernisse, Mark Griffin, Ron Moe-Lobeda, Miles Richardson, Barbara Quinn, Ruedi Risler, Alfred Mustey Shiga, Scott Soules, Ryan Thomas, Patty Whisler

Also in attendance: Sonja Warner, Rob Anderson, Adam Hestad, and Kateri Schlessman

Staff in Attendance: Brian Scott (facilitator), Susan McLain (Seattle Department of Planning and Development-DPD), Radhika Nair (DPD), David LeClergue (DPD), Tony Mazzella (Seattle Department of Transportation)

**At this meeting**, working group members and other participants focused on areas in the center of the district, within the “walkshed” of the station area, including the “red bubble” identified at the previous meeting. Conversation centered on potential features of public places and new buildings that will help augment the transit station, and support neighborhood livability and future investment. After an initial presentation of background information by staff, participants engaged in a group discussion around the following questions:

1. *How can this area function well with respect to circulation between key areas in the district particularly for pedestrians?*
2. *Can this area provide a civic space or community gathering spot in the UDistrict? What are our resources in this area?*
3. *Can we conceive of a network of pedestrian connections and civic/open spaces? What are some ideas for ways in which streets, especially, can serve a broader range of community needs over time? Are there places where the following types of streets may be useful: green streets, woonerfs, festival streets, alleys?*
4. *How can development on private property contribute to the character of street frontages and the network of public spaces? What are some features we would like private development to incorporate?*

The discussion during meeting #3 built upon the group’s June 20 meeting, when participants worked in small groups to identify the potential character of neighborhood subareas, and to identify corridors and desired connections between neighborhood areas.

## Summary of "What We Heard"

### Public Realm:

- Behavior & civility, as well as built form
- Use & programming of public space
- Activation of public space
- Active / multi-use sidewalks and streets
- Open Space Network

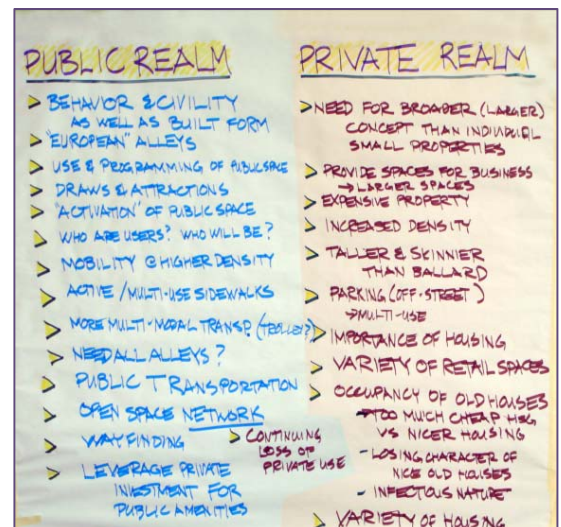
### Ideas / Examples:

- Multiple uses:
  - Public / Private / Nonprofit --> 3-legged stool
  - Retail / Residential / Social Services / Larger Community



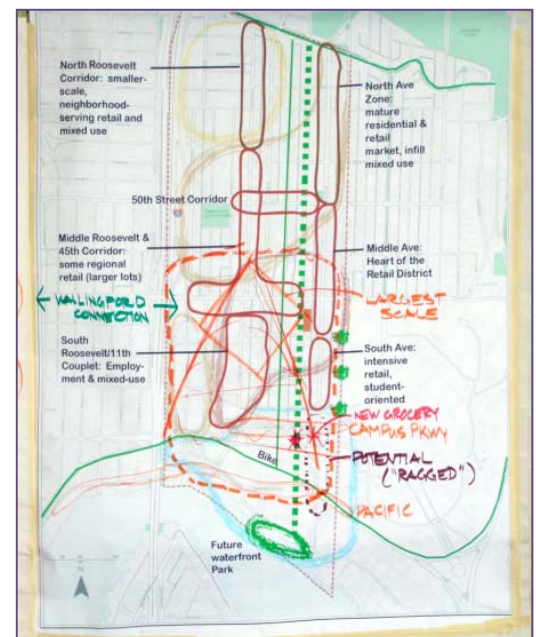
### Private Realm:

- Need for broader (larger) concept than individual small properties
- Increased density
- Taller & skinnier than Ballard
- Variety (!)
  - of Housing
  - of Retail Spaces
  - of Commercial spaces
- Occupancy of old houses (esp. north of 50<sup>th</sup>):
  - Multiple tenants
  - Predominance of very inexpensive housing
  - Loss of nice older single-family houses (use and character)
  - Infectious nature of under-investment and decay



### Map:

- "Largest Scale" -- we ended up with the dashed orange line
- Campus Pkwy & Pacific as important streets
- Potential South Ave "ragged" zone



## **Comments on Neighborhood Subareas and Connectors**

- Rebecca Barnes pointed out that NE Pacific is a major connector from Fremont to Montlake while Campus Parkway is a major transportation hub and will also be the location a new urban grocery store in the fall. The Ave might have a third zone, besides the North and South Ave, where it interfaces with these two major connecting streets.
- In response to questions about depictions of east-west connections, especially across the freeway, on the map, Susan clarified the bubbles on the map represented character of physical environment and not necessarily future connections.
- The group expressed strong interest in a briefing from Sound Transit and King County Metro on proposed changes to transit when the light rail station opens. Staff responded that DPD would organize a meeting for this purpose soon.

## **Reviewing Background Information and Potential Ideas for Placemaking**

Susan and Radhika gave a PowerPoint presentation with a handful of slides highlighting summary information from the previous meeting, including maps of neighborhood subareas, corridors and connections. A map of refinements based on feedback from FDUD members to the identified subareas was also presented. Following this, a series of slides on potential placemaking ideas for the area around the station, such as public spaces, creative use of street rights-of-way, the range of building types and heights were presented. The full presentation can be found on the DPD project web site.

## **Highlights of Group Discussion**

- Placemaking is more than the built environment – it should also focus on identity and character, (the UDistrict is eclectic and authentic) as well as encourage good behavior and civility
- Activating alleys such as the ones in Europe is a great way to project a better image for the district
- While we think about placemaking, we should think about some draws and places that might be missing today. For example, what would future populations want in the UDistrict? What do students need?
- We need services as well as new businesses
- On the other hand, the UDistrict already has a lot of non-profits and fewer businesses, therefore it might be that the priority right now might be to attract a diverse group of businesses that can help make it a place people can live, shop and work in
- Attracting new development might be challenging because of the fragmented ownership pattern in the area. Unlike Fremont or South Lake Union we don't have a supply of large parcels ripe for redevelopment
- Land values in the UDistrict are also quite high, which is an additional challenge to attracting new development
- Higher density can help make projects financially feasible given this background, and also kickstart growth
- The UDistrict needs retail, residential, social services and larger-scale commercial uses

- 45th street is potentially a good location for larger format retail and commercial uses
- Heights can also be higher around 45th street
- The UDistrict can and should have taller, skinnier buildings than Ballard
- Good candidates for height include almost all of the area south of 50th from Roosevelt to the Ave
- Narrow streets within the planning area might be a concern for mobility so we will need to use existing streets wisely
- Parking is a very important consideration for new development
- It is important to note that when people talk about parking being an issue, they mean free parking. The UDPA owns and operates several parking lots in the area and there has never been a night when they were all sold out
- The University of Washington can be a potential partner to share parking
- Activating alleys should be accompanied by strategies for managing parking and garbage collection
- Increasing density should be accompanied by standards such as requiring two front doors for alleys, wider sidewalks, and mid-block connections
- The possibility of extending the South Lake Union trolley line up Roosevelt should be considered
- Uses and programming distinctive about the UDistrict such as theater, football and basketball games should be encouraged and used to attract people to the area
- Adding more housing to the area is very important – we have to find ways to create urban neighborhoods within the UDistrict
- Heights of 150' or 220' would make urban residential neighborhoods feasible
- Other elements that can help support urban living are large format retail like grocery and hardware stores. A potential location for these could be the area west of Roosevelt
- Wider sidewalks and activated alleys would also be helpful
- A base of long-term residents is essential
- Ongoing loss of single-family homes through conversion to cheap, inexpensive student housing is a concern
- A multi-pronged solution to this issue should include increased density (more families with kids for example would automatically take care of this problem) and enforcement
- We should make sure the increase in density is attractive to families – include incentives for larger units for example
- Open space network and shared community assets should be prioritized for incentives over elements like rooftop gardens on buildings
- Institutional creep has resulted in a loss of significant tax-paying property and is a concern
- Attracting UW alumni to the UDistrict is an opportunity